

Appl. No. 10/733,458
Reply to Office Action of April 29, 2005
Page 5 of 9

Remarks/Arguments:

I. Introduction

Upon entry of the present amendment, claims 1-5 and 7 will be pending in this application. Claim 6 has been incorporated into claim 1 and cancelled. Claims 4 and 5 have been amended to clarify features of the collar and rotatable ring. Based on the following remarks, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of the pending claims.

II. 35 U.S.C. § 112

The Examiner has rejected claims 5 and 6 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph as failing to comply with the enablement requirement. The Examiner states that the claims contain subject matter not described in the specification in such a way that enables one skilled in the art to make or use the invention. With respect to claim 5, the Examiner has objected to the attachment ring location as not being described by the specification. Claim 5 has been amended to clarify that the attachment ring is rotatable about the aircraft-side part, not the store-side part. Support for this amendment appears in the specification at pages 3-4. Claim 6 has been incorporated into claim 1, and claim 1 clarifies that the threaded clamping ring is on the aircraft-side part, not the store-side part.

III. 35 U.S.C. § 103

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-7 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 4,533,194 to Boichut in view of U.S. Patent No. 3,430,184 to Acord. The Examiner states that Boichut discloses an electrical connector comprising an aircraft-side part and a store-side part, the aircraft-side part having a core with a forward end and electrical contacts for engaging electrical contacts in the store-side part, an outer shell snap-engageable with the store-side part and adapted to be pulled off as the store is separated from the dispenser, the outer shell separate and removable from the core and fitted from the

Appl. No. 10/733,458
Reply to Office Action of April 29, 2005
Page 6 of 9

forward end on assembly. The Examiner concedes that Boichut does not disclose the store or the aircraft/dispenser, but asserts that Acord discloses a store and an aircraft with a connector connecting the two. The Examiner's position is that it would have been obvious to use the Boichut device with an aircraft and store because Boichut discloses a quick and positive break required for the Acord aircraft/store releasing operations. Applicant respectfully traverses the Examiner's rejection and requests reconsideration and withdrawal thereof.

The Examiner concedes that Boichut does not disclose a store or aircraft/dispenser. However, inconsistent with this admission, the Examiner asserts that Boichut discloses an electrical connector comprising an aircraft-side part and a store-side part having the claimed elements. However, Boichut does not disclose an electrical connector of a kind that would be suitable for use between an aircraft and a store in the manner described in the present application. The push-pull type connecting device disclosed by Boichut is used for connecting coaxial cables or optical cables (see, e.g., column 1, lines 28-30 and column 2, lines 65-67). Nowhere are uses such as aircraft-to-store electrical connections mentioned, in which it is necessary to safely pull apart and thereby disconnect two connector parts as a store separates from an aircraft, as discussed in the "Background of the Invention" in the present application. Specifically, "[t]he electrical connector must be positively and safely disconnected to avoid damage to the electrical circuit and its anchoring parts on the store and aircraft or dispensing system, as the store separates from the aircraft, often at considerable relative speed."

Instead, however, the Boichut push-pull type connecting device must be manually released by removing an outer cylindrical sleeve 3 axially backwards or forwards, to allow small tongues or collet fingers 15 to be released from a corresponding groove in a cooperating connector part. Such a connector therefore will not be capable of separating under applied axial load as required in the case of electrical connectors according to the present invention.

The Examiner also asserts that, at the time of the invention, it would have been obvious to use the Boichut device with the aircraft and store of Acord because Boichut

Appl. No. 10/733,458
Reply to Office Action of April 29, 2005
Page 7 of 9

discloses a quick and positive break between mating connectors, characteristics that are required for aircraft/store releasing operations as taught in Acord. However, on the contrary, there is nothing to motivate one of ordinary skill to use the Boichut device with an aircraft and store as taught by Acord, particularly because the Boichut device is incapable of the necessary separation under applied axial loads. Because there is no suggestion or motivation to combine the Boichut and Acord references, the Examiner has failed to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness. See MPEP § 2142.

Nonetheless, in the interest of advancing the prosecution of this case, Applicant has amended claim 1 to emphasize this difference by specifying that the outer shell is adapted to be pulled off the store-side part by separation of the store from the aircraft or dispenser.

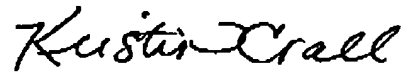
As a further distinguishing feature, claim 1 additionally specifies that a threaded clamping ring is engaged with the core, by which the outer shell is clamped to the core. This feature is taken from claim 6 (now cancelled) and clearly distinguishes over Boichut, whose outer shell must be movable so that the small tongues 15 can be released to allow disconnection of the male and female connector parts.

Appl. No. 10/733,458
Reply to Office Action of April 29, 2005
Page 8 of 9

CONCLUSION

For at least the above reasons, Applicant respectfully requests allowance of claims 1-5 and 7 and issuance of a patent containing these claims in due course. If there remain any additional issues to be addressed, the Examiner is urged to contact the undersigned attorney at 404.815.6147.

Respectfully submitted,



Kristin M. Crall
Reg. No. 46,895

KILPATRICK STOCKTON LLP
1100 Peachtree Street
Suite 2800
Atlanta, Georgia, 30309-4530
404.815.6147